10: Roscoe M-5 (ca. 1900)1915
FL11 Luo FL11

Industries.

241 **Agricultural pursuits.** Agriculture is the principal pursuit of the people and they have now become dependant upon their crops for the grain which forms their chief food. Millet and maize are grown freely and are ground into flour for making porridge. Men and women work together in the fields and dig them for the seed. They use the common hoe with a long handle when digging, and roughly hoe the ground, when rains are expected. Sweet potatoes, beans and sesame are grown more for change of diet and as additions, such as we should call [302] savouries, to the porridge than as necessaries of life. When the crops are a few inches high, the chief and all his people shave their heads, and from that time till harvest no one is allowed to shave again. After harvest the headman shaves and all the people follow his example. Should any one neglect [68] this custom and shave before the time, it is said to be injurious to the crops and to prevent the grain from ripening. The culprit is therefore fined for his heedless conduct. When the corn is in the ear, a goat is killed and the contents of the stomach are scattered about the field to prevent blight and to preserve the crops from being injured by hail-storms.

231 **Cow-keeping.** Cows form the principal wealth of the people. The numbers vary in a village according to the pros- 234 perity and success of the community. Milk is used as an article [262] of food, especially when sour and clotted, but it is more of a luxury, in the present progressive stage of the tribe, than a necessity; and the meat of the animals is almost entirely reserved for ceremonial use. Cattle are herded by boys and [462] young men, who mix their herds and flocks of goats and sheep. Women and girls are strictly forbidden to herd or to milk cows; they may churn and wash the milk-vessels, but there their duties in connection with cows end. Each village has its cattle, and the young men and boys of the place are responsible for their safety during the day, while they graze on the hill-side. 234 When a cow calves, the calf is left with the dam during the first ten days and the cow is not milked. On the morning of the eleventh day the cow is milked and the milk is churned, the

10: Roscoe M-5 (ca. 1900)1915
FL11 Luo FL11

butter being used for cooking a special meal which is eaten by the owner of the cow and his wife; a little of the butter is set aside and they smear it on their lips, but none of it may be smeared on their bodies. After the meal has been eaten, the cow is milked regularly and the milk may now be drunk by all the family.

Oxen used for riding. Oxen are frequently used for riding. The young men train the animals to this and ride them constantly. They turn them as they wish by prodding the side of the animal's cheek with a stick from which it turns away. The animals are trained, however, to obey the voice rather than wait for the stick. They trot along at a fast rate and cover the ground quicker than a man can walk.

Sheep and goats. Sheep and goats are kept by all villagers. Goats especially are eaten by men and women without any restrictions. Fowls are also kept, though, as is usual among most African tribes, fowls have to find their own food, and their chickens are constantly preyed upon by hawks and kites, and those that grow up are of a poor and miserable kind.

Building.

Architecture and mode of building. The houses are round huts with conical thatched roofs. They have an outer wall of stakes three and sometimes four feet high with mud smeared over them on the inside and a central pole passing through the roof, to which the rafters are attached. The roof is thatched with grass and the end of the central pole, which passes through the roof, is rudely carved. The houses are grouped together, leaving room enough to pass between them, and a growing fence surrounds them. Many villages have no outer fence, but are built high up the hill-sides for protection from hostile clans.

Religion.

Religious beliefs. Apart from worship of the dead and a belief in ghosts, the people have little religion. They call the supreme being Nyasi, who, they say, is to be found in large trees. In times of trouble or sickness they make offerings to him of an animal which is killed under a large tree, and the

11: Hartmann M-5 (ca. 1920) 1928 FL11 Luo FL11

has not yet gone to live with her husband, the corpse is carried to the village of her husband and buried there, outside the hut which was already built for her. 764

On the 3rd day after the burial of a child the grave is swept, and some of the earth is poured along the wall of the hut without any further ceremonies. 765

If a woman dies who is with child a slight incision is made below her navel, but no attemp is made to save the child. 763

P. S. On the day of the burial of either husband or wife the cattle are not milked. They are driven outside the kraal, but are not herded. When they return at night they are milked, but next morning the milk is not churned. The fresh milk is drunk by the boys of the kraal and the neighbourhood. 764 234

After the death of a man or a grown up boy no cultivation or weeding of gardens is done by the inhabitant of the kraal for the next 4 days; after the death of a woman or adult girl for the next 3 days. The same regulations holds good on the day of the funeral of a child and on the 3rd day after its burial when the grave is swept. 765 241

If either the father or mother of twins dies the whole neighbourhood will abstain from cultivation or weeding for either 4 or 3 days. If one would break these rules the gardens that season would yield no crops or a very poor one.

When a cow calves about two days are allowed to pass while the calf is suckled before milking commences. The milk obtained from the cow during the first two weeks or until the umbilical cord of the calf drops, is all drunk by young men in the village. This milk is stored in a pot in which a little buttermilk, which has been treated with urine, has been placed. As mentioned before the Luo believe that drinking fresh whole milk is the cause of tapeworm infestation, and the buttermilk is added to the fresh milk so as to eliminate this danger. When the umbilical cord of the calf has dropped the woman who owns the cow is allowed to use the milk for churning butter. The roots of a plant known in Luo as *obuwo* is added to the churning calabash as a preserving agent because fresh milk is stored in the calabash for about twelve to twenty-four hours before churning. During the churning process a little bovine urine, which has been stored for a few days, is added to the milk to accelerate the formation and facilitate the separation of the butter. This urine is also believed to be a good preservative for both the butter and the buttermilk, which will be stored for use in cooking various kinds of food. On the day the first butter is made into ghee, a little of the ghee is fed to the calf and the rest eaten by a group of people in the house. The reason why a sample of the first ghee is given to the calf is not very clear; but some people say that it protects the calf from developing diarrhoea and indigestion when the later butter of the dam is boiled and made into ghee. They believe that otherwise the boiling of the butter during ghee-making would cause diarrhoea in the calf. 233 [272] 234 [824] [237]

Milking is done twice a day, in the morning and evening, by the boys and young men. Girls, women and old men are only allowed to milk in homes where there are no young men. Before commencing milking, the calf is allowed to suck its dam for a minute. It is then tied in front of the dam while she is milked. After some milk has been drawn the calf is allowed to suck for another minute and then re-tied while more milk is taken. Finally, the calf is allowed to suck and stay with the dam for about an hour, after which it is separated from the mother for at least ten hours before the next milking.

If a cow is slow to wean her calf a method used for drying her off is to fix a muzzle (*osembo*) on which strong thorns are fixed around the mouth of the calf so that when it tries to suck, the thorns prick the dam and cause her to kick the calf away. Another device is to smear the teats of the dam with cow dung, the taste of which stops the calf from sucking.

If the calf dies, its hide is dried, folded properly and a little salt solution is sprinkled on it to make it taste pleasant when licked by the dam while being milked. Before milking, the teats are washed or cleaned with warm water to stimulate the milk flow.

14: Johnston G-4, 5 (no date) 1904 FL11 Luo FL11

Both sexes drink the *beer* which is made from grain, but the women never drink with the men. The women make the *butter*.

The men do not *smelt iron*, but obtain it in pig form from the Bantu Kavirondo. There is even a certain prejudice against *blacksmiths* amongst the Ja-luo. They are called "Yothetth," and among some of the tribes constitute a separate caste called "Uvino." They *forge* spears, knives, bill-hooks, and axes, but their hoes are imported from their Bantu neighbours. *Shields* are made of buffalo or ox hide, and also of ambatch wood. Their *spears* have small heads, and shafts of tremendous length. They use *clubs*, and also long leaf-shaped swords, which they have borrowed from the Masai or Nandi. Bows and arrows are still employed, but the arrows are no longer poisoned. Poison was said to be derived from the venom of snakes, and also from certain herbs. Their musical instruments are very similar to those of the Kavirondo Bantu.

Girls are betrothed at the age of seven, and go to their husbands at the age of ten or eleven, payment being made by degrees over the years elapsing between the betrothal and the *marriage*. The girl is taken by her unmarried girl companions to her husband's house. The father of the girl kills an ox and takes the meat, together with a quantity of sorghum porridge, to the bridegroom's house to provide a *wedding feast*. On the following day the bridegroom's brothers, and his other wives, if he has any, take the newly wedded wife back to her father's village, where there is another great feast. The bridegroom does not attend. The father of the girl next day presents his daughter with a goat, and she returns to her husband, who continues to make payments to his father-in-law. The total amount of the marriage payment may reach to six cows, or their equivalent. If the man stops paying, his wife will leave him and go back to her father's village until the payments are resumed. If within a year of the marriage the woman does not bear a child, the husband may stop his payments, but he has no claim to the return of what has been already paid, so long as his wife remains with him. If a wife dies without having borne children, the amount paid for her is returned, unless the husband agrees to accept one of his *deceased wife's sisters*, for whom only a small complimentary present is paid. If a woman refuses to stop with her husband, she is given to another man, and whatever this man gives for her is paid over to her first husband. If a woman has a child and is ill-treated, she may leave her husband, but must leave her child behind with the father. If the child be a boy, when he grows up and the mother gets old she generally returns to live with her son. If after a marriage has been arranged an avaricious father is loth to part with his daughter, the young man employs his friends to waylay the girl in the daytime. If, however, the girl after capture refuses to stop with her